

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 05040 060642Z

12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AGR-20 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /201 W

----- 047701

R 060600Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6992

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USEC BRUSSELS 019

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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1. GOVERNMENTS OF UNITED KINGDOM AND NEPAL HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH BRITISH HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE, ON GRANT BASIS, 7000 TONS OF FOODGRAINS TO NEPAL. FOOD AID WILL CONSIST OF 6000 METRIC TONS WHEAT AND 1000 METRIC TONS BARLEY, PLUS SIX NEW STORAGE SILOS. BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL COVER ALL COSTS UP TO NEPALESE BORDER, AT WHICH POINT GON ASSUMES ALL RESPONSIBILITY. SCHEDULE CALLS FOR FOODGRAINS TO ARRIVE IN INDIA ON SINGLE VESSEL EARLY IN FEBRUARY.

2. EMBASSY AND AID HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY UNCOORDINATED BRITISH DECISION SINCE: (A) DURING 1972/73 EXERCISE IN PROVIDING FOOD ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL THERE WAS CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS OF UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES. EMBASSY/USAID OFFICERS, HOWEVER, ONLY HEARD OF NEW AGREEMENT BY CHANCE A FEW DAYS BEFORE OFFICIAL SIGNING OF AGREEMENT WAS ANNOUNCED IN LOCAL PRESS; (B) BRITISH EMBASSY HERE WAS AWARE OF DIFFICULTIES WHICH GON FACED IN HANDLING DISTRIBUTION OF EARLIER USG AND WFP FOOD SHIPMENTS; (C) WFP HAD VIRTUALLY SIMULTANEOUSLY REACHED DECISION TO CANCEL LAST

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PAGE 02 KATHMA 05040 060642Z

2000 TONS OF ITS EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR NEPAL,

SINCE IN ITS JUDGMENT PRESENT FOOD SITUATION IN NEPAL DID NOT APPEAR TO JUSTIFY NEED FOR OUTSTANDING SHIPMENT. AFTER HAVING INFORMED GON OF DECISION, WFP REP WAS SOMEWHAT CHAGRINED TO LEARN OF NEW BRITISH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; (D) OFFICIALS OF NEPAL'S AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CORPORATION, THE GOVERNMENT AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE, HAVE INDICATED TO MISSION PERSONNEL THAT THEY HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FOOD AID AT THIS TIME.

3. IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRY, BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER EXPLAINED THAT FOOD GRAINS WERE BEING GIVEN TO NEPAL TO COMPLY WITH UK'S COMMITMENT TO EEC TO PROVIDE FOOD ASSISTANCE TO LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. FOODGRAINS BEING SUPPLIED TO NEPAL, WHICH WERE OF FRENCH ORIGIN, HAD BEEN PURCHASED BY BRITISH FROM EEC. BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER SAID THAT FOOD ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH GON AT POLITICAL LEVEL EARLY IN SPRING. HE WAS UPSET THAT GON HAD BEEN SO SLOW IN SIGNING AGREEMENT, AS HIS GOVERNMENT AWARE OF PROBLEMS THAT WOULD ARISE IF FOODGRAINS CANNOT BE MOVED PRIOR TO ONSET OF SEASONAL MONSOONS IN MAY-JUNE. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT BRITISH WOULD WIPE HANDS OF WHOLE MATTER ONCE SHIPMENTS REACHED NEPALESE BORDER, WHERE DISPOSITION OF SHIPMENT TURNED OVER ENTIRELY TO GON.

4. BASED ON ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT NEW BRITISH FOOD ASSISTANCE UNDERTAKEN TO SATISFY EEC DONOR REQUIREMENTS AND TO RESPOND AT SAME TIME TO UK'S POLITICAL INTERESTS--NEAPL STILL PROVIDES BURKHA SOLDIERS FOR BRITISH MILITARY--RATHER THAN TO ANY REAL NEED, WHICH CAN BE DOCUMENTED AT PRESENT, FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE.
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